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ABSTRACT

The threefold purpose of this study was to (1) assess the reputation of professional educational and psychological journals from educators' rankings; (2) compare these findings with rankings from psychologists; and (3) compare the rankings made by different educational interest groups. Usable questionnaires were returned by 682 American Educational Research Association members out of a random sample of 1,927. The top ranked journals were: American Educational Research Journal, Review of Educational Research, Harvard Educational Review, and Phi Delta Kappan. Journal rankings clearly reflected research interest areas, but more similarity was found among educational interest groups than between educators and psychologists. Tables list the top 74 journals overall; as well as the top ten journals for each of the following interest groups (administration, learning and instruction, measurement and research methodology, evaluation and program development, counseling and human development, curriculum and objectives, and social context of education); and for the types of institutions represented (higher education, public or private common schools, government, and nonacademic research). (Author/CTM)

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RATING OF EDUCATIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL JOURNALS

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ABSTRACT

Rating of Educational and Psychological Journals

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The threefold purpose of this study was to: (1) empirically assess the "reputation" of professional education and psychological journals from educators' rankings, (2) compare findings with rankings from psychologists, (3) compare educational interest groups' rankings. From 1,927 randomly selected AERA members, 682 usable questionnaires were analyzed. AERJ, RER, Harvard Educational Review, and Phi Delta Kappan were top ranked journals by educators. More similarity was found among educational interest groups than between educators and psychologists. Journal rankings clearly reflected educational interest areas, rather than an overall "top ten" ranking. Implications of the results in assisting researchers and administrators in evaluating journal publication quality are discussed.

RATING OF EDUCATIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL JOURNALS

Introduction

The present study was designed to assess the "reputation" or prestige value of a sample of 74 journals in the fields of EDUCATION & PSYCHOLOGY. The study attempts to provide a picture of how journal ratings vary as a function of the professional interest areas* of ADMINISTRATION, CURRICULUM AND OBJECTIVES, LEARNING INSTRUCTION, MEASUREMENT AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY, COUNSELING AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY, SOCIAL CONTEXT OF EDUCATION, AND SCHOOL EVALUATION AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT. This study has also attempted to compare PSYCHOLOGISTS' AND EDUCATORS' perceived prestige of selected journals. As a spinoff, the study has derived data which may have implications for faculty evaluation purposes in colleges and universities, and in research institutions. Because of the recently documented tendency of institutions of higher education to reward publications almost to the exclusion of other activity areas, (Hind et al 1974; Clark et al 1976; Tuckman, et al 1976) it is imperative that as rigorous criteria as possible be utilized to assess the quality of given publications.

Previous studies, in attempting to assess Psychology journal reputations, have encountered a number of criticisms such as inadequate selection of respondents, inappropriateness of respondent sample, and criticism of the type of rating procedure used. The present study has attempted to improve upon former efforts, and to provide empirical evidence of rated journal quality to researchers, to journal readers, and to administrators who are confronted with the task of evaluating the quality of journal publications, often times in disciplines foreign to them. Further,

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*These areas correspond to the interest areas of the American Educational Research Association.

selected journals in fields of Education are included, in contrast to previous studies, which assessed only Psychology journals.

Mace and Warner (1973) in their attempt to assess journal quality state,

> "The reputation of the given journal can not be presently determined due to the lack of empirical data indicating interpersonal agreement among psychologists. The purpose of the present survey was to assess the extent of such agreement by asking psychology department chairmen to rate prominent psychology journals."

The above study selected 64 journals on the basis of frequency of citation in PSYCHOLOGICAL ABSTRACTS and/or because they were judged to be of significant value to psychologists. Results of the Mace and Warner study are of necessity limited by virtue of the fact that department chairmen were the raters. Hohn and Fine (1973) in providing a critical review of the Mace and Warner study, indicate that, despite some journals having infrequent citation in Psychological Abstract, they were of significant value to psychologists, and should have been included in the list of journals to be rated. In addition, Hohn and Fine contended:

> "Psychologists in academic units other than traditional psychology department such as those employed in Colleges of Education, social welfare or human development were excluded from the sample, as well as those employed in non-academic positions. Why not a random sample of those psychologists listed in the APA Directory, rather than a select group of chairmen who may differ from the population of psychologists in other important ways?"

Koulack and Kesselman (1975) in an attempt to improve upon previous assessment of journal reputation studies, selected several hundred members of the American Psychological Association, chosen randomly from the 1972 APA Directory. Specifically, they chose 6% of the members within each division of the APA to respond to questionnaires on journal rankings. In addition, they developed a modified list from the original Mace and Warner list by culling additional journal names from the PSYCHOLOGICAL ABSTRACT. The Koulack and Kesselman results indicated that journal ratings did,

indeed, vary considerably as a function of the category of work of the responding psychologists. They state,

> "As might be expected, journals ranked among the top ten differ for people involved in different types of work and having different interests... The present data should prove useful for those psychologists who wish to know if the journals are considered important by their colleagues, and to which journals they should submit particular articles in order to reach an audience with particular interest."

Procedures

A list of 74 journals was compiled from a modified list provided by Best (1970), from the Koulack and Kesselman list, and from suggestions made by several College of Education faculty members. While no set of respondents can hope to be the "most appropriate" to everyone's satisfaction, the present authors decided to use as their respondent sample members of the American Educational Research Association (AERA). It was felt that members of this particular association would probably be the most journal-sophisticated of the many educational associations which might have been utilized for the present study. Respondents were 1,927 AERA members, randomly selected from the 1975 AERA register. The respondents were asked to complete the following task:

> "Please rank, from the list below, those journals that you consider to be among the top ten; in other words, those journals in which you would most like to be published and/or those in which you expect to find material important to you as an educator. Indicate your ranking on the blank adjacent to the journal title using a number 1 next to the journal which you consider the best, 2 next to the journal which you consider second best, and so on, until you have ranked 10 journals. If journals that you consider to be among the top ten are not listed, enter the title(s) on the blank lines at the bottom of the questionnaire, and rank using the above criteria.*

Results

Out of the 1,927 questionnaires delivered, 682 respondents provided usable questionnaires, for a response rate of 35%. Seventy-

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*These instructions are slightly modified from those used in the Koulack and Kesselman study.

six percent of the respondents identified their primary affiliation as being university, ten percent with school systems and six percent with governmental organizations (state, local, or federal). Respondent characteristics closely parallel the demographic characteristics of the AERA membership, with 68% of AERA members being affiliated with universities, 11% with school systems, 3% federal government, with the remaining percentage being spread among other governmental and non-governmental affiliations.

The overall journal ratings were determined by totaling the absolute number of times a given journal was placed in the top ten. Rankings of the top ten journals are presented in Table 1 below. The ranked list of the 74 journals included the present study are presented in the appendix. In addition to the 74 journals ranked, a total of 183 other journals were written in by the respondents. However, no write-in journal received more than twenty ranking frequencies as a contender for the top ten, whereas the tenth ranked American Psychologists received 183 top ten rankings.

TABLE 1: Top Ten Journal Rankings by AERA Members

1. American Educational Research Journal
2. Review of Educational Research
3. Harvard Educational Review
4. Phi Delta Kappan
5. Journal of Educational Research
6. Educational Researcher
7. Journal of Educational Psychology
8. Educational & Psychological Measurement
9. Journal of Educational Measurement
10. American Psychologist.

As noted previously, respondents were asked to identify the one AERA division which most nearly corresponds to their professional interests. Tables 2 through 8 below present the rankings of the respondents by professional interest area.*

*Data from the Interest Area of History and Historiography were not presented, since there were only 8 respondents in this category.

These data presenting rankings as a function of professional interest area of respondents, clearly indicate that journal prestige varies considerably as a function of interest area. Specifically, there were only three journals which were ranked in the top ten by all seven professional interest areas: The American Education Research Journal, Review of Education Research, and the Harvard Educational Review. Phi Delta Kappan missed being ranked in the top ten only by the interest group of "Measurement and Research." All other journals missed the top ten ranks by 2 or more of the 7 professional interest groups responding.

TABLE 2: Administration (N = 78)

1. American Educational Research Journal
2. Phi Delta Kappan
3. Harvard Educational Review
4. Review of Educational Research
5. Journal of Higher Education
6. Educational Researcher
7. Journal of Educational Research
8. Research in Education
9. NEA Research Bulletin
10. Bulletin of NASSP

TABLE 3: Learning and Instruction (N = 196)

1. American Educational Research Journal
2. Review of Educational Research
3. Journal of Educational Psychology
4. Harvard Educational Review
5. Phi Delta Kappan
6. Journal of Educational Research
7. Child Development
8. Educational Researcher
9. American Psychologist
10. Psychological Bulletin

TABLE 4: Measurement and Research Methodology (N = 154)

1. American Educational Research Journal
2. Review of Educational Research
3. Educational and Psychological Measurement
4. Journal of Educational Measurement
5. Journal of Educational Statistics
6. Psychometrika
7. Journal of Educational Psychology
8. Journal of Educational Research
9. Harvard Educational Review
10. Psychological Bulletin

TABLE 5: Evaluation and Program Development (N = 53)

1. American Educational Research Journal
2. Phi Delta Kappan
3. Educational Researcher
4. Review of Educational Research
5. Harvard Educational Review
6. Journal of Educational Measurement
7. Research in Education
8. Journal of Research and Development in Education
9. Journal of Educational Research
10. Educational and Psychological Measurement

TABLE 6: Counseling and Human Development (N = 66)

1. American Educational Research Journal
2. Review of Educational Research
3. Journal of Counseling Psychology
4. American Psychologist
5. Harvard Educational Review
6. Phi Delta Kappan
7. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology
8. Measurement and Evaluation in Guidance
9. Child Development
10. Educational and Psychological Measurement

TABLE 7: Curriculum and Objectives (N = 67)

1. American Educational Research Journal
2. Review of Educational Research
3. Phi Delta Kappan
4. Harvard Educational Review
5. Journal of Educational Research
6. Research in Education
7. Journal of Teacher Education
8. Educational Researcher
9. Journal of Research and Development in Education
10. Bulletin of NASSP

TABLE 8: Social Context of Education (N = 39)

1. Harvard Educational Review
2. American Educational Research Journal
3. Review of Educational Research
4. Sociology of Education
5. American Journal of Sociology
6. American Sociological Review
7. Phi Delta Kappan
8. Social Forces
9. Sociology and Social Research
10. Social Problems

Respondents were asked to identify the one category that most clearly corresponded to their current position. Categories utilized were Higher Education, Public or Private School (K-12), Government, and Non-academic Research Institutions. Tables 9 through 12 below present journal rankings as a function of current work position. Here, again, as with interest area, the data reveal little commonality of journal rankings across work position. Specifically, the American Educational Research Journal is the only journal which is common to the top ten rankings of the four positions of Higher Education, Public or Private common schools, Government, and Non-academic Research. (Recall that the data presenting journal rankings as a function of interest area

revealed three journals which appeared on each of the 7 interest areas studies.) Three Journals (Review of Educational Research, Harvard Educational Review, and Journal of Educational Measurement), appeared on 3 out of the 4 lists of top ten journal rankings by work position.

TABLE 9: Higher Education

1. American Educational Research Journal
2. Journal of Counseling Psychology
3. Child Development
4. Review of Educational Research
5. Higher Education Review
6. Phi Delta Kappan
7. Developmental Psychology
8. Journal of Educational Psychology
9. American Sociological Review
10. Psychological Bulletin

TABLE 10: Public or Private Common Schools

1. American Educational Research Journal
2. Phi Delta Kappan
3. Journal of Teacher Education
4. Journal of Educational Measurement
5. Review of Educational Research
6. Journal of Educational Research
7. Exceptional Child
8. Educational Technology
9. Higher Education Review
10. Educational and Psychological Measurement

TABLE 11: Government

1. American Educational Research Journal
2. Journal of Counseling Psychology
3. Educational and Psychological Measurement
4. Journal of Educational Measurement
5. Phi Delta Kappan
6. Journal of Educational Psychology
7. Research in Education
8. American Psychologist

9. Educational Researcher
10. Child Development

TABLE 12: Non-academic Research

1. Psychometrika
2. Child Development
3. Journal of Educational Measurement
4. Phi Delta Kappan
5. Psychological Bulletin
6. American Educational Research Journal
7. American Sociological Review
8. Higher Education Review
9. Journal of Educational Psychology
10. Review of Educational Research

As noted earlier, one purpose of the present study was to compare Psychologists' and Educators' perceived prestige of selected journals. In order to compare the rankings of journal quality by Psychologists and by Educators, the ranking data from the present study are compared with the rankings of Psychology journals by members of the American Psychological Association from the Koulack and Kesselman study. Only two of the journals were rated in the top ten by both Educators and Psychologists; the American Psychologist was rated number one by Psychologists and number ten by Educators; The Journal of Educational Psychology was ranked seventh by both Educators and Psychologists. When the relationship between the rankings of the sample of 32 journals which were common to the Koulack and Kesselman study and to the present study was determined by means of a Spearman RHO, a non-significant RHO = 0.27 ($t = 1.54$; $DF = 30$, $p < .05$) was obtained. This correlation indicates that there is little commonality of criteria used by Educators and by Psychologists in ranking the prestige value of journals.

Discussion

First, in interpreting results of the present study, one potentially biasing factor should be noted. The respondents, as noted earlier, were AERA members. As such, it is possible that the high regard for AERA journals which was evidenced by the data, might be tempered somewhat

had a different group of respondents been utilized.

Results of the present study clearly indicate that there is, in reality, no "top ten" list of Educational or Psychological journals. In reality, there is a top ten list for each interest area (in Education), a top ten list for each work position, and little agreement between Psychologists and Educators as to what constitutes the top ten journals. It is only in the Educators' Interest Areas of Learning, Counseling, and Measurement and Research, that Psychology journals are found ranked within the top ten (American Psychologist, Psychological Bulletin, and Educational and Psychological Measurements). It appears that cross-fertilization of ideas between the disciplines of Psychology of Education, at least in so far as journal prestige ranking (and no doubt usage) is concerned, is limited.

The present study has presented some empirically-derived data in determining the prestige of Educational and Psychological journals. Such data should be of considerable interest to journal readers, researchers and other scholars concerned about journal prestige. In addition, these data contain implications for those administrators involved in evaluating the merit of scholars' published works. Said evaluators will immediately recognize the implications of these data. Not only must one be journal-sophisticated within the particular umbrella discipline for evaluation purposes, but one must also be journal-sophisticated for the faculty's specialty area within that discipline, and aware of journal prestige in that particular work position. What a monumental task confronts a College Dean, perhaps an Economist or Political Scientist, when he or she attempts to evaluate the research effectiveness, through journal publications alone, of an industrial psychologist! Perhaps a chairperson in an Education or Psychology department may have a somewhat easier task, he or she being closer to the research publications in that discipline than would be a College Dean. However, even with such sophistication, the administrator must recognize that area of interest of a researcher and type of work

institution will, to a great extent, determine the perceived prestige of given journals in a scholar's discipline area. Given today's intense concern with research and publication productivity on the part of administrators, it appears evident that such procedures to determine journal prestige as those followed in the present study, must be followed in any research-oriented discipline, in order to permit legitimate evaluation of scholars' research productivity.

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APPENDIX

Overall Rankings of Journals by AERA Members*

1. American Educational Research Journal
2. Review of Educational Research
3. Harvard Educational Review
4. Phi Delta Kappan
5. Journal of Educational Research
6. Educational Researcher
7. Journal of Educational Psychology
8. Educational and Psychological Measurement
9. Journal of Educational Measurement
10. American Psychologist
11. Research in Education
12. Psychological Bulletin
13. Child Development
14. Journal of Research and Development in Education
15. Journal of Higher Education
16. Psychometrika
17. Journal of Teacher Education
18. Journal of Educational Statistics
19. Journal of Experimental Education
20. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology
21. Developmental Psychology
22. Measurement and Evaluation in Guidance
23. Psychological Review
24. Sociology of Education
25. NEA Research Bulletin
26. Educational Technology
27. Reading Research Quarterly
28. Journal of Counseling Psychology
28. Journal of Applied Psychology
30. Journal of Verbal Learning

*Brackets Denote Tied Ranks

31. American Journal of Sociology
32. American Sociological Review
33. Journal of Experimental Psychology
33. Exceptional Child
35. Bulletin of NASSP
36. Journal of Reading Research
37. Psychological Monographs
33. Journal of Learning Disability
38. Sociology and Social Research
40. American Journal of Psychology
41. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry
41. Psychology in Schools
43. Journal of Consulting Psychology
43. Journal of Special Education
45. Comparative Education
45. Journal of Educational Sociology
45. Journal of Secondary Education
48. Journal of Personality
48. Journal of School Psychology
48. Perceptual and Motor Skills
48. Social Forces
48. Journal of Social Psychology
48. Journal of Marriage and Family
54. Urban Education
54. American Journal of Mental Deficiency
56. Social Problems
56. Psychological Reports
58. Journal of Clinical Psychology
59. Journal of Psychology
60. History of Education Quarterly
60. Sociometry
62. Nursing Research
63. Journal of Child Psychology, Psychiatry & Applied Disciplines
63. Junior College Journal

65. Journal of Abnormal Psychology
66. Mental Retardation
67. Genetic Psychology Monograph
67. Journal of General Psychology
69. Journal of Genetic Psychology
69. Mental Hygiene
71. Psychological Record
73. American Journal of Psychiatry
74. Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease

I. Please indicate the ONE AERA Division which most nearly corresponds with your professional interests. (Check ONE division only)

- ☐ Administration
- ☐ Curriculum & Objectives
- ☐ Learning & Instruction
- ☐ Measurement & Research Methodology
- ☐ Counseling & Human Development
- ☐ History & Historiography
- ☐ Social Context of Education
- ☐ School Evaluation & Program Development
- ☐ None of the above

II. PRESENT POSITION: (Please check the ONE category that most clearly corresponds to your present position).

Higher Education (College or University)

- ☐ Faculty
- ☐ Administration
- ☐ Counseling
- ☐ R & D
- ☐ Other: _____ (Please Specify)

Public or Private School (K-12)

- ☐ Instruction
- ☐ Counseling
- ☐ Administration
- ☐ R & D
- ☐ Other: _____ (Please Specify)

Government

- ☐ LEA
- ☐ State (or State Department)
- ☐ Federal
- ☐ Other: _____ (Please Specify)

Research Institutions (non-academic)

- ☐ Public
- ☐ Private
- ☐ Other: _____ (Please Specify)

PLEASE TURN TO SURVEY ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE

II. Please rank, from the list below, those journals that you consider to be among the top 10; in other words, those journals in which you would most like to be published and/or those in which you expect to find material that is important to you as an educator. Indicate your rankings in the blank adjacent to the journal title using a No. "1" next to the journal which you consider as the best, No. "2" next to the journal which you consider 2nd best, and so on, until you have ranked 10 journals.

If journals that you consider to be among the top 10 are not listed, enter the title(s) on the blank lines at the bottom of the questionnaire, and rank using the above criteria.

___ American Educational Research Journal
___ American Journal of Mental Deficiency
___ American Journal of Orthopsychiatry
___ American Journal of Psychiatry
___ American Journal of Psychology
___ American Journal of Sociology
___ American Psychologist
___ American Sociological Review
___ Bulletin of the NASSP
___ Comparative Education
___ Child Development
___ Developmental Psychology
___ Educational & Psychological Measurement
___ Educational Researcher
___ Educational Technology
___ Exceptional Children
___ Genetic Psychology Monographs
___ Harvard Educational Review
___ History of Education Quarterly
___ Journal of Abnormal Psychology
___ Journal of Applied Psychology
___ Journal of Child Psychology, Psychiatry, and Allied Disciplines
___ Journal of Clinical Psychology
___ Journal of Comparative & Physiological Psychology
___ Journal of Consulting Psychology
___ Journal of Counseling Psychology
___ Journal of Educational Measurements
___ Journal of Educational Psychology
___ Journal of Educational Research
___ Journal of Educational Sociology
___ Journal of Educational Statistics
___ Journal of Experimental Education
___ Journal of Experimental Psychology
___ Journal of General Psychology
___ Journal of Genetic Psychology
___ Journal of Higher Education
___ Journal of Learning Disabilities
___ Journal of Marriage and the Family
___ Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease
___ Journal of Personality
___ Journal of Personality and Social Psychology
___ Journal of Psychology
___ Journal of Reading Behavior
___ Journal of Research & Development in Education
___ Journal of School Psychology
___ Journal of Secondary Education
___ Journal of Social Psychology
___ Journal of Special Education
___ Journal of Teacher Education
___ Journal of Verbal Learning & Verbal Behavior
___ Junior College Journal
___ Measurement & Evaluation in Guidance
___ Mental Hygiene
___ Mental Retardation
___ National Education Association Research Bulletin
___ Nursing Research
___ Perceptual & Motor Skills
___ Phi Delta Kappan
___ Psychological Bulletin
___ Psychological Monographs
___ Psychological Record
___ Psychological Reports
___ Psychological Review
___ Psychology in the Schools
___ Psychometrika
___ Research in Education
___ Review of Educational Research
___ Reading Research Quarterly
___ Social Forces
___ Social Problems
___ Sociology & Social Research
___ Sociology of Education
___ Sociometry
___ Urban Education

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